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TOP SECRET CODEWORD

Sino-Soviet

- I. It is to the Sino-Soviet relationship I would like now to turn because much of what each nation does in the outside world can be explained in terms of the rivalry and tense relations between them.
- II. The focus of attention in this relationship right now, of course, is the possibility of Sino-Soviet conflict as a result of the Chinese attack on Moscow's ally Vietnam. Thus far, the Soviets seem to be taking a cautious approach, limiting their countermeasures mainly to funnelling aid to Vietnam and sustaining the propaganda offensive against Peking.
 - A. The Soviets are likely in the future to calibrate what more they do against how far the Chinese go in Vietnam -- and the gravity of the threat posed to Hanoi. Should that threat become very serious, we could not rule out the chance of some eventual Soviet military action against China.
 - B. This confrontation over Southeast Asia is only the latest and most dramatic reflection of the Sino-Soviet geopolitical struggle around the world. That struggle has become more intense since Mao died, and especially in the last year.

III. Beijing's (Peking's) anti-Soviet strategy has been keyed to the strengthening of political and economic relationships with the West--particularly with the US--and with Japan. They have reason to be satisfied with developments in the past year.

- A. Both the US and Japan agreed to language the Soviets consider anti-Soviet in joint documents issued in connection with the normalization of Sino-US diplomatic relations last month and the conclusion of the Sino-Japanese Peace and Friendship Treaty last October. The language in question opposes any state's desire to establish "hegemony" over others. The Soviets believe this must refer to them.
- B. The Chinese have significantly improved their trade ties with Western Europe and Japan, and are on the verge of their first, modest arms purchases abroad.
- C. Chairman Hua Guofeng's (Hua Kuo-feng) visits to Yugoslavia and Romania last fall demonstrated Beijing's willingness and capability to take on the Soviets in their own backyard.
- D. The Soviets sought to turn the tables last fall by signing a Peace and Friendship Treaty with China's neighbor Vietnam. Although this was not a formal mutual defense pact, it had a clause calling for "consultations" if a threat were raised to either party.

1. It was not long after the signing of this treaty that the Vietnamese launched their blitzkrieg against Cambodia -- which has now led to a Chinese attack against Vietnam.
2. The Soviets and Vietnamese may have over-estimated the deterrent effect the treaty would have upon China.

IV. The Sino-Soviet confrontation over Vietnam has meanwhile further sharpened Soviet anxiety over the US posture in the Sino-Soviet-US triangle.

- A. The Soviets had long expected the normalization of Sino-US ties, but they were probably surprised and upset by the timing -- coming as it did in the final stages of their own SALT negotiations with the US.
- B. Since the Chinese attack on Vietnam, Soviet propaganda has sought to exploit it against the US by alleging that the US "colluded" with Deng in discussing the attack during Deng's visit to the US.

1. The Soviets probably do not really believe this. They know the US tried to dissuade the Chinese from attacking, but may believe we didn't try hard enough.
2. They also see US refusal to go along with the USSR in pretending that Vietnam did not attack Cambodia as harmful to their interests and helpful to Beijing -- by linking the two invasions as issues to be settled together.

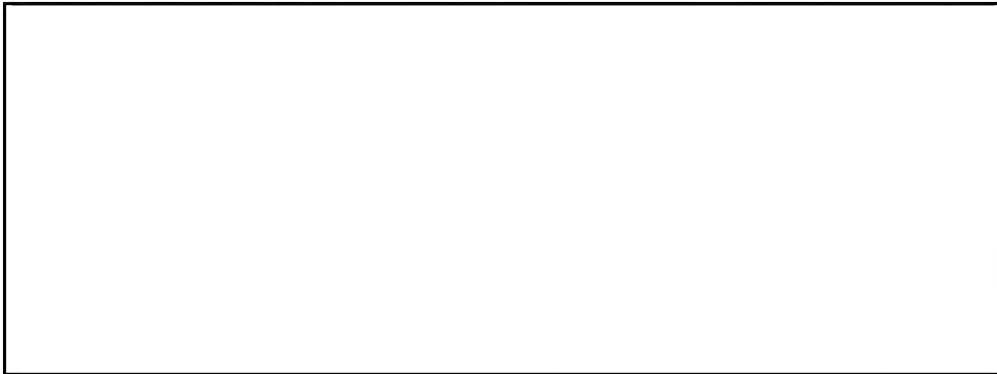
V. In the new situation created by Sino-US normalization and the war in Indochina, the Soviets are likely to intensify policies they have already put into effect to counter China's more activist policies and their perception of Sino-US cooperation against the USSR.

A. Moscow probably will redouble efforts to strengthen its position in India, and to prevent any significant improvement in Sino-Indian relations. They may be encouraged in this effort by India's tendency to sympathize with Vietnam in the Sino-Vietnamese conflict.

1. Although Indian Foreign Minister Vajpayee made some progress toward resolving the long-standing Sino-Indian border dispute during his February visit to Beijing, he left Beijing a day early to signal his disapproval of the Chinese attack.

B. The Soviets may try to mend their strained relations with North Korea, where Kim Il-sung has increasingly leaned toward the Chinese in recent years. The Soviets have publicly noted that the North Koreans have not taken sides on the Sino-Vietnamese war (although Pyongyang has expressed criticism of Vietnam's invasion of Kampuchea.)

C. They may well soon begin trying to improve relations with the Japanese, aided by the fact that the Ohira government has publicly criticized China's attack on

- D. In Eastern Europe, they may step up the pressure on Romania in an effort to impose greater conformity on their East European allies. Romania -- along with Yugoslavia -- has again refused to back the Soviet line over events in Southeast Asia.
- E. Meanwhile, Moscow is already using the Sino-Vietnamese war in its continuing efforts to dissuade West European leaders from selling arms to China. The Soviets have long been warning the West that sale of weapons to Beijing would damage relations with the USSR.
1. The Soviets have been hampered in bringing pressure on the West Europeans by their competing desire to build relationships with them that will offset what they see as China's inroads in Europe. 25X6
 2. 
 3. The Soviets are now arguing that the Chinese have demonstrated that they are aggressors, and that weapon sales are thus doubly inappropriate.

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B.



XI. In contrast to the situation in Vietnam, the Chinese have the inside track with North Korea and that situation is unlikely to change anytime soon.

A. The Chinese have long been closer political allies of North Korean President Kim Il-song than have the Soviets; in the past year or so they have also replaced the Soviets as Kim's principal source for material assistance.

B. China's recent moves to normalize its relations with both Japan and the US are not entirely welcome in

Pyongyang, but the visits to North Korea last year by Hua Guofeng and Deng Xiaoping -- and the assurances they presumably provided -- helped to alleviate some of Pyongyang's apprehensions.

- C. Kim Il-song has long sought to exploit the mutual antagonism between China and the USSR, and he undoubtedly will make some effort to restore a more balanced relationship with the two communist powers.
- D. Although the Soviets have made limited overtures toward Kim Il-song, they have not demonstrated any great desire to compete more vigorously for Kim's favor. (However, the presence of North Korean pilots in Libya for the reported purpose of flying Libyan MIG-23s, may suggest a Soviet intention to give MIG-23s to Pyongyang as well.)

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I. Indochina

A. China/Vietnam

1. As we had anticipated (we issued warning memorandum 14 February), Chinese attacked across VN border 17 February with elements of 7 armies. (Elements of 8 armies now engaged.)

- Stated purpose to punish Vietnamese for alleged "provocations" along Sino-VN border
- However, wider (but unstated) purpose to demonstrate to Vietnamese that China will not permit them to intrude with impunity into areas in SEA of vital concern to China, e.g., Kampuchea. In wake of VN invasion of Kampuchea China wants to show it is not a "paper tiger."
- China's offensive also intended to show USSR that it cannot get away with using Vietnamese as Soviet surrogates in SEA in way that Cubans have been employed in Africa

2. Intense fighting at several points along the border especially in the Cao Bang, Lao Cai, and Lang Son areas 25X1



- Situation remains fluid with advantages constantly changing

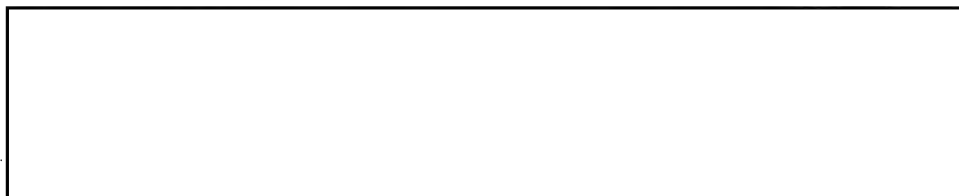
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- Deepest incursions in Lao Cai, Cao Bang, and Lang Son areas

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3. Invasion began at dawn on 17th and Chinese attacked virtually every town, village, and military position along frontier
 - Most assaults by battalions or regiments
 - One or more divisions attacked at Lao Cai, Cao Bang, Lang Son
 - Tanks and artillery provided fire support to infantry
4. A major military objective of Chinese invasion was destruction of a large part of Vietnamese forces defending border region
 - Largest assaults directed at paramilitary divisions at Lao Cai, Cao Bang, and Dong Dang-Lang Son (approx. 30,000 men)
 - Chinese consolidated after initial attack but now pressing forward on all fronts, particularly against Lang Son
 - China has more than 300,000 troops near border and capable of pushing deeper
5. A second major objective is to "teach Vietnamese a lesson" by defeating main forces

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- Draw infantry units now defending Hanoi (5 main force divisions) fighting as reinforcements
 - Ease pressure on Kampuchean resistance by forcing Hanoi to recall some combat forces from that region
6. Major set-piece battle may thus be in offing
- VN moving tanks, APC's, infantry, artillery northwards; those probably are main force units, possibly including some from Kampuchea
 - Lang Son may become the crucial combat area

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- Vietnamese main forces in Military Region III (northern VN) also preparing to move
 - Units are much better than paramilitary forces but not Hanoi's best
 - Hanoi saving best fighting force -- 1st Corps and 3 divisions in vicinity of Hanoi for the "real thing"
7. China still building up border forces
- Five armies at time of invasion
 - Three more armies have shifted south and now fighting

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- Continued buildup suggests China expects another round of fighting, on a larger scale

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8. Possibility of wider conflict therefore exists despite Chinese intentions to limit the fighting

- China has not yet inflicted sufficiently clear-cut defeat on Vietnamese to "teach them a lesson"
- The deeper China goes into Vietnam, the more difficult it will be to withdraw - 1962 India war script may not work this time
- China must also face prospect of Soviet response (Soviet-Vietnamese Peace and Friendship Treaty signed Nov 78)

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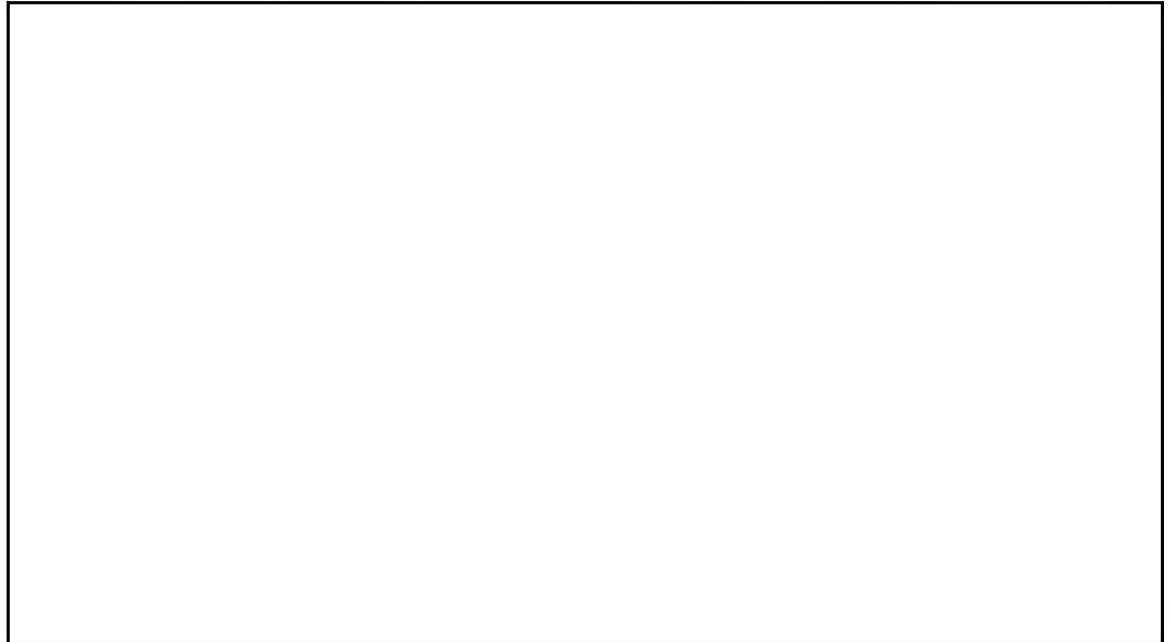
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B. Soviets watching with concern



4. Soviet officials have warned in non-specific terms of possible Soviet retaliation if Chinese go "too far." However, Moscow has been careful not to commit itself in advance to any course of action. Still no military augmentations on S/S border, although Sov forces have been conducting unusual exercises and there is heightened activity near Blagoveshchensk

5. Soviet options

-- consultations (under Treaty of Friendship of November)

-- conspicuous military aid, possibly including "volunteer" fighter pilots

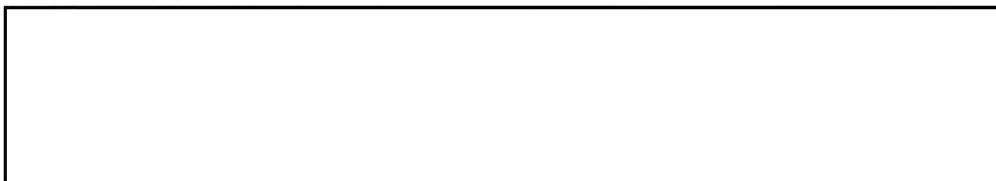
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- naval show of force, presence at Haiphong, Danang, or Cam Ranh Bay
- demonstrative show of force on S/S border



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7. Balance in North favors Soviets who could move with little or no warning

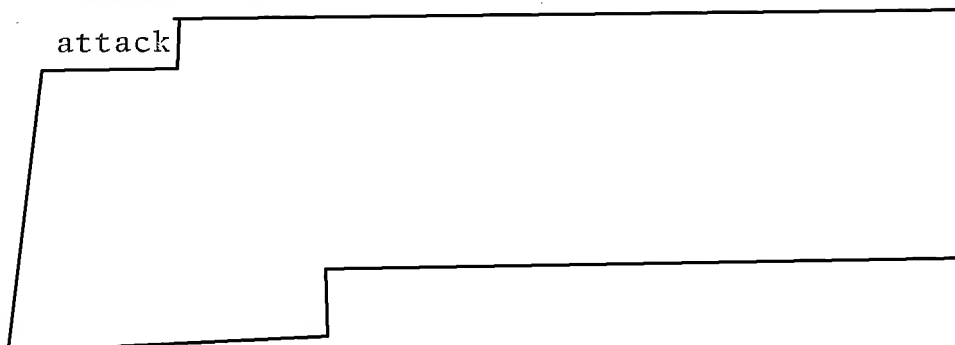
- Soviets - 44 divisions (500,000 men)
- Chinese - 98 divisions (1,700,000 men)
- Soviets - 12,000 tanks
- Chinese - 4,500 tanks
- Soviets - 2,250 aircraft
- Chinese - 2,700 a/c, but less capable

8. Soviet reaction will be determined by nature and severity of Chinese move against VN

- Will wish to avoid protracted ground engagement in China

- However, Chinese see some risk of Soviet attack

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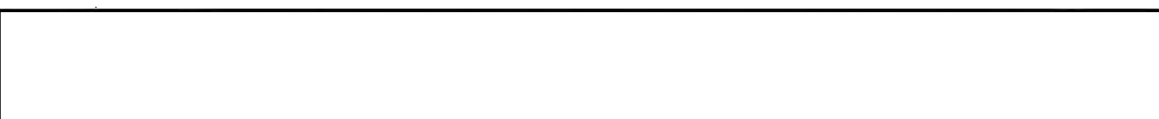


C. Kampucheans continue stiff resistance in countryside

1. Fighting throughout the country, particularly in the SW
2. VN re-supply effort hampered--roads trenched, bridges destroyed.
3. Quick VN thrust took major towns and roads but did not destroy Kampuchean forces. Pol Pot believed operating near Battambang.
4. 16 of 31 VN combat divs tied down.

-- So far, Sino-VN conflict has not forced Vietnamese to withdraw substantial forces from Kampuchea to help resist Chinese, although some units may have been sent north.

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6. Sihanouk in Peking, where Chinese may use him to head a new "coalition government" more acceptable to Kampuchean and world opinion than Pol Pot

-- Problem for Chinese is that Sihanouk refusing to work with Pol Pot

7. If Kampuchean resistance can hold out until rainy season arrives in May-June, odds favoring Vietnamese will be considerably reduced and prospects improved for establishment of viable anti-VN political structure.